



# Ma CHADASH! מה חדש!

What's New! The newsletter of Temple Shalom Synagogue Center, Auburn, Maine ק"ק היכל שלום

February 2021, Shevat/Adar 5781

## Temple Shalom Travels to Europe, Explores the Heavens, and more!



Purim 2021



Friday, February 26, 6:00 P.M., All Ages!

## FROM THE RABBI



On our recent virtual trip to Krakow, our excellent Israeli tour guide, Gadi Ben-Dov, shared a story about the great 16<sup>th</sup> century Rabbinic sage, Moses Isserles, more commonly known as the “Rema.” The Rema, who lived in Krakow, had just completed a massive work—a comprehensive guide to Jewish rituals and practices—when he became aware that another great 16<sup>th</sup> century sage, Joseph Karo, from the holy, kabbalistic city of Tsfat in Israel, had recently published a similar work. There were differences, however. The Rema’s work reflected the

teachings of Ashkenazic (roughly, Central and East European) Rabbinic sages whereas the work by Karo was based on Sephardic (roughly, North African and Middle Eastern) Jewish traditions. The Rema made a fateful decision. Rather than publish his own competing work, the Rema decided to painstakingly annotate Karo’s work—carefully and respectfully pointing out the different rulings and customs of Ashkenazic Jewry where appropriate. This combined, annotated edition, known as the Shulchan Aruch or Code of Jewish Law, constitutes the most important source for Jewish law and tradition to this day. But, perhaps more importantly, it ensured the continued absolute unity of Sephardic and Ashkenazic Jewry (not to be taken for granted) by viscerally affirming that what our respective Jewish communities have in common far exceeds our differences.

Students of the Talmud know that the Talmud frequently goes to extreme—and sometimes absurd—lengths in order to minimize differences in the teachings of the sages. We often encounter two or more viewpoints that at first appear to be wildly divergent or even diametrically opposed but by the time Talmudic or later Rabbinic commentators are done with their analysis, we are expected to believe that the sages in fact basically agree in almost every circumstance—with their differences now limited to one or two farfetched and improbable cases. While this can be frustrating to some students, myself for example, who find the unabashed twisting of logic and stretching of truth somewhat hard to take, the message is clear: the highest priority is unity, and unity demands doing whatever is necessary to affirm commonalities over differences. I should point out that the Talmudic tradition only extends this generosity to accepted Rabbinic sages. The Talmud is only too happy to highlight and even exaggerate their differences with those whom they have relegated to outsider status. The end result is a strong sense of unity among Rabbinic insiders and an absolute break with those deemed to be on the outside.

Unity is a choice. We choose unity by going out of our way to reinforce commonalities. Conversely, by emphasizing and dwelling on our difference we can almost guarantee brokenness and disunity. I have come to believe that there is a pleasure center inside most of us that is activated when we argue or fight. There is something about us that is most excited and alive when we are forcefully asserting that we are absolutely right, and our opponents are absolutely wrong. This is why, if we are to remain united—whether as couples, families, communities, nations, co-religionists, or even as inhabitants of the same planet—it is vital for us to maintain the presence of mind to force ourselves to pause mid-argument or debate and take the time to emphasize our many commonalities. To explicitly point out all that we share and to actively seek to minimize the significance of our differences. Even, in the Talmudic tradition, if we have to resort to unabashed twisting of logic and stretching of truth?

Rabbi Sruli

## FROM THE PRESIDENT



I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic, for which it stands, one Nation, under G-d, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Today, these words are more important than they have been in 150 years. Our nation is at a crossroads. Our Civil Discourse has become more violent. We need to bring our National Conversation back to CIVIL discourse and away from violence. This will be hard. Together, we can accomplish this.

Many believe, in their souls, contrary to logic and all legitimate evidence, that the election was stolen. I stand here today to tell you IT WAS NOT STOLEN. I can cite all of the reasons why and how it wasn't, from the court cases lost, to the Republican election officials, declaring it fair, to Attorney General Barr, to a decidedly Trump Supreme Court, all declaring that the election was fair and Joe Biden won. I know that those who think it was stolen, truly believe it in their souls. I ask you to look at the unbiased evidence. If it was stolen, how could so many Republicans AND Trump appointees go along with it?

No matter which side of the fence you are on, stand up and shout that storming the Capitol, by those on the right was WRONG and unacceptable. But, when the left does it, like they did in March 2011 in Wisconsin, make sure you stand up and shout that is wrong as well. It is wrong no matter who storms which Capitol, left or right. We need CIVIL DISCOURSE and not mob rule. Those who came before us and those who will come after us are depending on US... on all of US to bring reason and civility back. The 244-year American Experiment Demands it. The 244-year American Experiment Deserves it.

Stand up for moderation in our speech and action. I recently heard a Democrat speak about Trump's Senate trial and all of the other priorities demanding our leaders' time. This person said that we (meaning Democrats) can multi-task. Implying Republicans cannot. Stand up! Demand that our representatives be completely civil. A few years ago, a friend of mine, Andrew (from California and a Republican) said that our mutual friend, Mike was a nice person, **even though Mike is a Democrat**. This too, is wrong. We are not nice or not nice people based on our politics. We need to work together. Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would have others do unto you!

Bill Clinton and George HW Bush, certainly on different sides, became fast friends after they both left office. George W. Bush recently said that he has strong policy disagreements with Joe Biden, but knows that Biden is a good man. Ronald Reagan and Tip O'Neill were at opposite ends of the political spectrum during Reagan's presidency. BUT, they worked together and were friends. Civility needs to return.

Like it or not, just as President Trump was the president of all Americans, now Joe Biden is president of all Americans. He faces greater challenges (pandemic, economy, racial divide and political divide like we have not seen in 150+ years) than any of his predecessors. He needs all of us to stand up for moderation and civility. He needs all of us to put our country before party.

## From the President (continued)

I pray that President Biden is up to the monumental challenges that lay right in front of him. I pray that all Americans support civil discourse and work to bridge the differences so that we can all thrive. I pray that we are not seeing the end of the American Experience, but a new great chapter in our enduring quest.

**ABOVE ALL ELSE, I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic, for which it stands, one Nation, under G-d, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.**

NOTE: I believe that the president of a Synagogue or any religious institution, for that matter, should not promote any political ideals or show any political leanings. In my years as president of Temple Shalom, I have tried to remain non-partisan. As many of you know, I am a Republican. When I voted for Hillary and Biden, I was really voting against Trump. I have attempted to be non-partisan in my article. I hope I have succeeded. If I have failed, it is my failing and no one else's. **Further, these are my views as an individual and not as president of our beloved Temple Shalom. The Temple remains non-partisan.**

David Allen

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Temple Board of Directors' Meeting

Monday, February 8, 2021

7:00 pm (via Zoom)

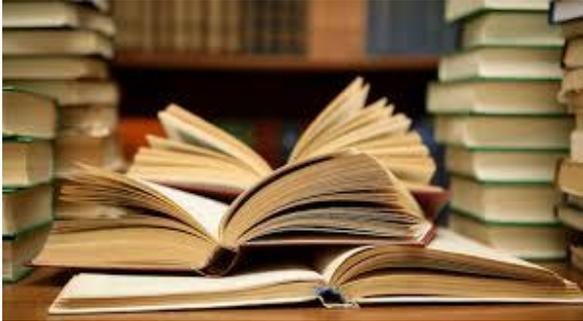
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## THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

At the last Board meeting, the cost of the Ma Chadash was discussed. To help cover costs, Aaron Burke donated \$50. And others, at the Board meeting, David Allen, Bertha Bodenheimer, Mitch Ross and Joel Goodman quickly followed his example, with their own \$50 donations. Thanks and appreciation to these five for your generosity. Feel free to send your donation to help cover the cost of the Ma Chadash.



# !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!BOOK GROUP NEWS!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!



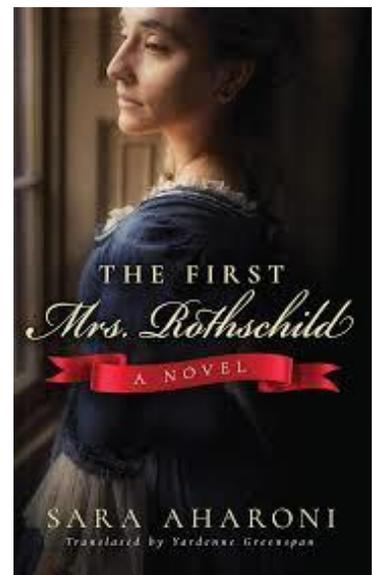
Joanne Harris' book *Five Quarters of the Orange* certainly has an intriguing title. And that is one of the many things we discussed on January 11. Present were Helene Perry, Babs Shapiro, Judy Abromson, Bertha Bodenheimer, Fredda Wolf, Mitch Ross, Marsha Auster, Margaret Meyer and me, Lesli Weiner. This book really had no Jewish content, except that it took place during WWII, except that the Nazi presence influenced much of the emotions and actions of the people in the small

French town of Les Laveuses, except that the one Jewish town inhabitant was turned in and 'disappeared', and except that the whole story revolves around the terms 'collaborator' and 'Resistance'. There was so much to focus on the human consequences in those inhuman times. This book is recommended, even by a Jewish book group!

*The First Mrs. Rothschild* by Sara Aharoni is our next novel. Here is the summary on Amazon:

**"In this award-winning historical saga, passionate young lovers in a Jewish ghetto rise to become the foremost financial dynasty in the world.**

It is the turn of the eighteenth century in Frankfurt, Germany, and young Gutle and Meir Amschel Rothschild struggle to establish themselves in the cramped and restricted *Judengasse*. But when Meir's talents as a novice banker catch the attention of a German prince, Meir is suddenly afforded entrée into the European world of finance and nobility, and the Rothschilds' lives are changed forever. As proud as Gutle is of her husband's success, she is also cautious—very much aware of the fact that her husband's rise is tied to his patrons' willingness to "see past" his Jewishness. As their family grows, and a dream of fortune comes true, so does their belief that money will ultimately bring the power needed to establish Jewish civil rights.



Told through Gutle's intimate journals, revealed across decades—from the French Revolution through personal tragedies and triumphs—*The First Mrs. Rothschild* paints a rich and intimate tapestry of family drama, world-changing history, and one woman's steadfast strength."

I hope to see you all on zoom on MONDAY, FEBRUARY 8 at 4PM. If you're not already on the email list, get in touch with Julie at [temple6359@aol.com](mailto:temple6359@aol.com) and she will let me know.....lesli

**Rabbi Sruli is always happy to speak with and meet with members or our Temple. Please call or text his cell phone at 914-980-9509 if you would like to speak with him or to arrange a time for a meeting. You can also call or leave a message at the Temple office and Rabbi Sruli will get back to you.**

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO

Robert Akerly	Feb .	1
Joel Salberg		3
Richard Abromson		4
Gary Shapiro		5
Barry Kutzen		5
Scott Kaplan		6
Corinne Weiner Mockler		9
Nicholas Mitchell		11
Gavriella King		14
Nancy Levenson		22
Andrew Casares		24
Lawrence Mohr		26
Cathy Tetenman		27
Joel Goodman		28



## Yahrzeiten

Morris L. Cohen	Feb.	6
Michael Steinman		6
Elinor Goldblatt		7
Meyers Ross		7
Jennie Rubinstein		8
Bashi Elyeshmerni		9
Jacques Renard		9
Helene Reeves		12
Bert Bodenheimer		13
George Rosenberg		13
Philip Renard		14
Jean Brown		16
Estelle Pennamacoer		16
Jacob Olstein		19
Hillel Passerman		21
Abe Tetenman		24
Milton Faiman		25
Hugo Schleicher		25
Jules Asher		27
Rabbi David Berent		27
Reba Koss		28
Joseph Zidle		28



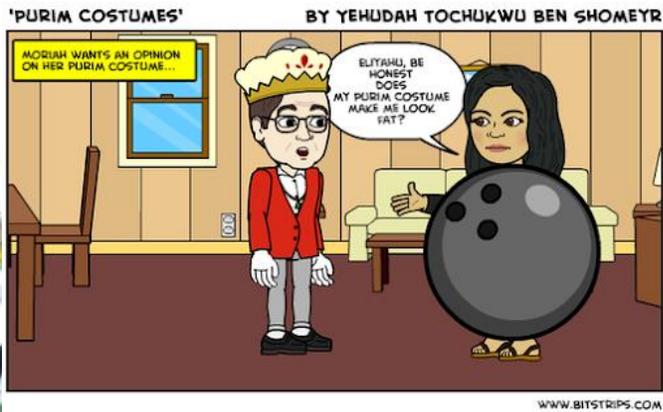
**Sometimes you just need a laugh!**  
*Happy Purim from Rabbi Sruli and Rebbetzin Lisa*

**Dry Bones** HAR HAR HAR



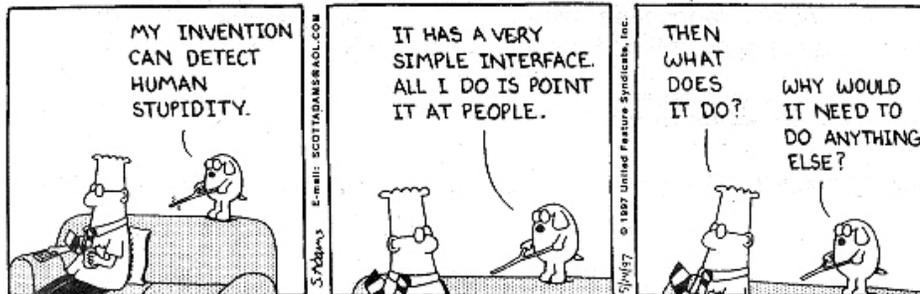
**The amount of jokes about coronavirus virus has reached worrying numbers.**

**Scientists claim we are in the middle of a pundemic!**



**DILBERT**

by Scott Adams



Ma Chadash/What's New is published monthly by Temple Shalom, Synagogue-Center. Temple Shalom is an independent congregation and a member of the Lewiston-Auburn Jewish Federation.

The mission of Temple Shalom, Synagogue-Center is to foster a strong Jewish identity and an active Jewish Community.

Rabbi Sruli Dresdner

Office Manager Julie Waite

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## SPEEDY RECOVERY

We pray for refuah sh'leimah – the full and speedy recovery of **Georgette Belanger, June Wilner Chason, Rachel Corvi, Dougie Fleck, Sara Graf, Robert Galumbeck, Isaak Gekhtin, Detlef Gerlach, Ariella Green, Sharon Hemond, Michael Jeser, Elizabeth Johnson, Suzan Katzir, Lynn Kaduson, Linda Koskela, Henry Lefkowitz, Lee Leveille, Bruce Meyer, Sandy Miller, Alice Richman, Joel Salberg, Bob Scott, Sandy Traister, Neal Weiner, Jack Weinstein, William White,** and all others who are not well at this time. *We like to hear good*

*news! Whenever you request that a name be put on this list, please let Temple Shalom know when it can be removed.*



## CONTRIBUTIONS

### GENERAL FUND

Gail Simonds

In memory of Adele Silverman

John & Jeanne Shapiro

In memory of Sherman Shapiro

Barbara Plavin

In memory of Morey Plavin

In memory of Doreen Plavin

Bertha Bodenheimer

In memory of Ronald Jean

In memory of Max Alberts

In honor of Behzad Fakhery's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday

In memory of Abe Tetenman

In memory of Bert Bodenheimer

Andrew & Sharon Bodenheimer

In memory of Ellen Bodenheimer

Marianne Wise

To David Allen in recognition of receiving  
the Person of the Year award

To Rabbi Sruli in recognition of receiving  
the Rabbi of the Year award

Paula Marcus-Platz

In memory of Bernard Marcus

Thomas H. Platz

In memory of John A. Platz

Thomas Isaacson & Emily Woodbury

In appreciation

Roz & Barry Kutzen

In memory of Sylvia Kutzen

In memory of Shirley Asher

The Bell Family

In memory of Ida Finks

Helene & Lewis Perry

In memory of Maynard Schwartz

Robert & Susan Scott

In honor of their 45<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary

Marcy & Les Lifter

In loving memory of Susie & Jim Lifter

Cathy & Stan Tetenman

In honor of Behzad Fakhery's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday

In memory of Abe Tetenman

Joy & Lewis Zidle

In memory of Richard Chicoine

### ABROMSON MEMORIAL FUND

Judy Abromson

In memory of Ruth S. Williams

In memory of Ernest B. Williams

In honor of Behzad Fakhery's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday

### LIBRARY FUND

Allen & Sandra Miller

In memory of Martin Miller

### MARCUS MEMORIAL GARDEN FUND

Carla Marcus

In memory of Bernard Marcus



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In memory of Philip Renard

In memory of Jacques Renard

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**RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND**

Carla Marcus

In appreciation

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In memory of Henry Hayes

Bob & Jackie Laskoff

In memory of Anne Leavitt

Steve Passerman

In memory of Maxwell Passerman

Babs & Michael Shapiro

In memory of Elsie Goodman

Helene & Lewis Perry

In memory of Ronald Jean

Happy birthday to Estelle Rubinstein

Happy anniversary to Bob & Jackie Laskoff

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# Purim 2021



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